



Students practice “pressing pause” during challenging situations so they can “TAKE A BREATH” and respond constructively.



Timer; Music and a device to play it on (optional).



Total Prep Time: 5 mins.
As this is the third Monday of the month, please consider sharing or re-sharing the Monthly Kick-Off activity, and if appropriate, video at www.everymondaymatters.org. Additionally, a three-minute recap of the previous weeks may add extra context to this week and help connect the dots around the monthly theme.

4 C's		SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING		SERVICE LEARNING	
•	Critical thinking	•	Self-awareness		Integrated learning
•	Communication	•	Self-management		High quality service
•	Collaboration	•	Social-awareness		Collaboration
•	Creativity	•	Relationship skills		Student voice
		•	Responsible decision-making		Civic responsibility
					Reflection
					Evaluation

GOALS FOR THE WEEK

- Practice turning off our thoughts to simply see, feel, and hear the present moment
- Identify opportunities to pause, “BREATHE”, and respond constructively to challenging situations
- Discover how focusing on our “BREATH” helps both our minds and bodies feel happier and healthier
- Understand how “TAKING A BREATH” is an important part of this month’s theme “MONDAY GETS BALANCED”



STUDENT ACTIVITY: "PRESS PAUSE"

- 1) **SHARE THE NAME OF THIS ACTIVITY WITH STUDENTS: "PRESS PAUSE"**
- 2) **ASK 1-3 QUESTIONS FROM THE LIST BELOW TO WARM STUDENTS UP ON THE ACTIVITY'S FOCUS:**

***NOTE:** *Choose questions appropriate to your students' ages, grades, ability levels, and classroom goals. Students may share their answers in pairs, small groups, or as a large group.*

- **What are some situations that make you feel stressed, nervous, anxious, or afraid?**
 - What about situations that make you feel angry, impatient, or frustrated?
 - **What does it feel like when you're stressed or afraid?**
 - What about when you're angry or frustrated?
 - **When you're stressed, frustrated, impatient, or feeling any other challenging emotion, how do you act?**
 - **Have you ever been able to "PRESS PAUSE" or "TAKE A BREATH" when you're feeling something challenging?**
 - If so, what is it like to "PRESS PAUSE" or "BREATHE" a little bit? Is it helpful to do so?
 - If you haven't done this before, what might it be like to do this? How might it help you feel and act?
 - **Do you think "PRESSING PAUSE" or "TAKING A BREATH" can help you to remain calm and confident in challenging situations?**
 - How does it help?
 - **How might "TAKING A BREATH" when things are tough help you make decisions that are good for you and others, as opposed to reacting right away?**
 - **What is the difference between reacting and responding to a situation?**
 - Answer: Reacting is an action you take without thinking, while responding is an intentional act
 - **How might "PRESSING PAUSE" on a challenging situation help you to respond rather than react, and therefore help you choose to act in a way you feel good about?**
 - **How could brainstorming responses to challenging situations today help you "PRESS PAUSE" and respond when you face challenging situations in the future?**
 - **How might brainstorming ways to "PRESS PAUSE" help you "GET BALANCED"?**
 - **How can "PRESSING PAUSE" and "TAKING A BREATH" help you show others that they MATTER to you?**
- 3) **SET UP THE "PRESS PAUSE" ACTIVITY:**
 - **Explain:**
 - We all have experiences that make us feel stressed, nervous, anxious, angry, impatient, or frustrated
 - Everyone in the world feels like that at some point or another
 - But it's important to remember that no matter what is happening to us, it is our choice how we react or respond to these challenging situations
 - We can choose to "PRESS PAUSE" and "TAKE A BREATH" and respond to a situation by making a choice that is good for us and others in that situation
 - Or, we can react quickly, not thinking about what we're saying and doing, which can often cause harm to others or ourselves
 - For example, if we are angry at a friend, we can react by yelling at them and blaming them for the situation, or we can respond by "TAKING A BREATH" and choosing to talk calmly and constructively about the situation
 - When we choose to respond instead of react, we're showing others that they MATTER to us, and so does our relationship with them
 - **Ask:**
 - When was the last time you responded instead of reacting to something?

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- Do you think you can learn more about responding in kind and constructive ways to challenging situations?
 - What might your relationships be like if you chose to respond more often than reacting?

4) START THE “PRESS PAUSE” ACTIVITY:

- **Explain:**
 - Today, we are going to play a standing version of musical chairs
 - You will walk around the classroom and “PAUSE” whenever I “PAUSE” the music (or say, “PAUSE”)
 - At each “PAUSE”, I will state one challenging situation, and you will have one minute to face the person closest to you to discuss how you can “PRESS PAUSE” and respond constructively in that situation instead of reacting
- **Instruct students to walk around the classroom (in a circle or not, it’s up to you)**
- **Play music and “PAUSE” the music when ready OR say “PAUSE” at random intervals**
- **When you “PAUSE”, have students pair up and discuss how they can respond (instead of react) to one of the challenging situations listed below for one minute:**
 - Frustrated by a difficult school assignment
 - Impatient because you’re waiting in long line (of people or traffic)
 - Angry at parent or teacher when they say you can’t do something
 - Annoyed at sibling or family member who takes or ruins something of yours
 - Anxious before public speaking
 - Feeling self-conscious or awkward at an unfamiliar social gathering or party
 - Offended by a rude comment or teasing
 - Overwhelmed by too much school work
 - Disappointed after losing a game or getting a bad grade
 - Embarrassed after making a public social blunder
- **Play music and “PAUSE” or randomly say “PAUSE” and have students discuss the challenging situations at one-minute intervals until you’ve gone through all of the topics, or until time is up**
 - If time allows, ask for a couple of volunteers to share out their ideas on how they would “PRESS PAUSE” and respond after students brainstorm for each challenging situation
- **Allow up to 10 minutes to play “PRESS PAUSE” with students**

5) AFTER THE ACTIVITY, ASK 1-3 OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS TO HELP STUDENTS REFLECT ON WHAT THEY’VE ACCOMPLISHED AND HOW THEY CAN TAKE THIS FORWARD:

***NOTE:** *Choose questions appropriate to your students’ ages, grades, ability levels, and classroom goals. Students may share their answers in pairs, small groups, or as a large group.*

- **What was it like to discuss how to “PRESS PAUSE” on some challenging situations?**
- **Have you ever been in one of these situations before?**
 - If so, how did you react or respond?
 - How would you respond differently going forward?
- **What were some of your favorite ideas on how you can “PRESS PAUSE” and respond constructively in these challenging situations?**
- **Going forward, how can you remember to “PRESS PAUSE” and “TAKE A BREATH” in challenging situations?**
- **What did you learn today about why it’s important to respond instead of reacting?**
- **Who is someone you can talk to when you need to “PRESS PAUSE” on a challenging situation?**
 - How will you go to them for support?
- **How do you think “PRESSING PAUSE” more often will help your relationships with the people you care about?**
- **What does “PRESSING PAUSE” have to do with “TAKING A BREATH”?**
- **How might “PRESSING PAUSE” help you “GET BALANCED”?**

- How will “PRESSING PAUSE” show others that they MATTER to you?
- What would your life be like if you “PRESSED PAUSE” more often?
- What about the world? How might it change for the better?

- 6) THANK STUDENTS FOR WORKING TOGETHER TO DISCOVER HOW THEY CAN “PRESS PAUSE” AND “TAKE A DEEP BREATH” TO RESPOND INSTEAD OF REACT IN THEIR LIVES.**
- 7) CHALLENGE STUDENTS TO CHOOSE TO “TAKE A BREATH” AND RESPOND BASED ON WHATEVER IS HAPPENING IN THEIR LIVES INSTEAD OF REACTING. REMIND THEM THAT THEY CAN SHOW OTHERS THAT THEY “MATTER” BY CHOOSING TO BRING OTHERS JOY, HAPPINESS, AND LOVE, EVEN WHEN THINGS ARE CHALLENGING. SHARE THEIR “PRESS PAUSE” IDEAS WITH THE CLASS.**
- 8) CONTINUE TO EXPLORE HOW TO “PRESS PAUSE” BY LEADING ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING EXTENSION IDEAS.**



EXTENSION IDEAS:

DO ONE OR MORE OF THESE EXTENSION IDEAS TO BRING THE LESSON FROM 15 MINUTES TO 30 MINUTES OR MORE.

- 1) Gallery Walk:** Have students write challenging situations that they regularly face or expect to face on chart paper posted around the classroom. As students walk around the classroom, have them take turns writing down positive, constructive responses to each situation on the appropriate piece of paper. Share out and discuss together at the end of the activity.
- 2) Weekly Debrief:** Find time every week to lead a full class discussion where students share how they reacted to any challenging situations that week and discuss how they could respond more constructively in the future. Students can also celebrate how they responded constructively to any challenging situations that week.
- 3) Heart-Led Hopscotch:** Use chalk to draw six smiley faces (or emojis) in different hopscotch squares to represent anger, sadness, fear, embarrassment, disappointment, annoyance, insecurity, disgust, overwhelm, or other emotions. Have students roll a die and count as they jump to the correct square. When they reach the square, ask them to express that emotion from the heart. In other words, ask them how they can speak or respond from the heart in a loving, positive, and constructive way even when they are feeling this challenging emotion. For example, students can say, “I feel x when y happens, and I need z.”

“ IF I LOVE MYSELF I WILL EXPRESS THAT LOVE IN MY INTERACTIONS WITH YOU, BECAUSE THAT ACTION WILL PRODUCE A LIKE REACTION. IF I INSULT YOU, YOU WILL INSULT ME. IF I HAVE GRATITUDE FOR YOU, YOU WILL HAVE GRATITUDE FOR ME. ”

- LAO TZU